

Access to higher education, urban schools also on the agenda

(Washington, DC)—Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) yesterday met with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to discuss improving K-12 education in Milwaukee and expanding access to college for low-income and first-generation college students.

“Secretary Duncan brings a lot of energy to the table, as well as enthusiasm for delivering top-rate education to America’s public school students,” Congresswoman Moore said. “I look forward to working with Secretary Duncan as well as dedicated teachers, parents and community leaders to continue the process of transforming Milwaukee schools into innovative learning centers that prepare our students for 21st century jobs.”

Congresswoman Moore has been an ardent supporter of initiatives that put low-income students on the path to succeeding in higher education. In particular, she has advocated for Federal TRIO programs, which are designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes six outreach and support programs targeted to serve and assist low-income, first generation college students, and students with disabilities, to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs.

“I am a product of TRIO,” Congresswoman Moore said. “Without the support of the TRIO programs as a senior in high school, I would not have made it to college. And it was TRIO’s continued confidence and guidance that helped me earn my college degree. So many of our students from low-income and disadvantaged backgrounds have the ability and determination to succeed in college, but they do not know how to get that first foot in the door, and they need a little extra support while in the university setting to make it through and earn their degree.”

“I see TRIO as an integral part of closing the gap that exists between the number of low-income students that earn college degrees, and their middle-income counterparts,” Congresswoman Moore said. “We can give kids all of the grants and entitlements out there, but if they do not have the right support system – like the one that exists in TRIO programs – they have a much smaller chance of success. I look forward to working with the TRIO community and my peers in Congress to lead the effort to expand these critical programs.”

Congresswoman Moore and Secretary Duncan also discussed the Milwaukee Public School system and ongoing efforts to improve student opportunity and educational outcome at these institutions, while narrowing the current budget deficit. Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors, and local education advocates have suggested several options to improve Milwaukee public schools, so that Milwaukee students have access to the best education and the most advanced resources. Congresswoman Moore will continue to monitor this conversation as it continues.

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